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Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, Nov. 10, 2005

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Man gets 30 days for child abuse

JACKSON - A man who prosecutors said tried to suffocate his 16-year-old daughter by wrapping her face in cellophane was sentenced to 30 days in jail for second-degree child abuse. Henry V. Lott II of Rives Junction also was sentenced Wednesday to five years of probation, the county prosecutor's office said.

Lott was convicted of child abuse in October but found not guilty of attempted murder, heroin possession and domestic violence in the case.

Authorities said they suspected Lott did not want to pay child support for his daughter, so he tried to kill her April 19 by bundling her face and hands in plastic wrap. Lott told police that he encased his daughter in cellophane to sweat out a fever.

Gongwer
November 9, 2005

SEX OFFENDER E-MAIL NOTIFICATION OK'D BY HOUSE PANEL

Residents who voluntarily sign up to get information regarding the sex offender registry would receive e-mail notices when a registered sex offender moves to a different zip code under legislation approved by the House Judiciary Committee Wednesday.

Sponsor of HB 4721, Rep. Barb Vander Veen said she wants residents to have access to the information without having to constantly check the Web site.

She referenced a school in her district, which placed a bus stop at the end of the driveway of a registered sex offender.

"I think this would help parents," she said.

However, Ms. Vander Veen acknowledged that more needed to be done to improve the state's sex offender registry.

"I don't think there's a way for that (registry) to be full proof," she said. "While this is part of the answer of parents protecting their children it is not the whole answer."

Ms. Vander Veen said she would support further legislation that would improve the registry, including changing its format, but added she would not take the lead to introduce any bills.

The issue came under question by Rep. Steve Bieda (D-Warren) who questioned whether the bill should move forward and instead suggested a more comprehensive approach to the issue be worked on.

The hearing on the bill comes on the heels of a Detroit News article that said state police have lost track of approximately 2,400 sex offenders.

"We do apparently have a lot of people lost in the system," Mr. Bieda said. "Perhaps, we should look at this more comprehensively."

Ms. Vander Veen then said that her bill should be looked at as an exclusive issue and that a revamping of the registry should be addressed at a later time.

The bill was unanimously reported out of committee.

STUDENT SAFETY ZONES: The committee unanimously reported HB 5397, which makes technical amendments to the Sex Offenders Registration Act to state that a person would be convicted of a felony if that person violated the ban on working or loitering in a student safety zone and had one or more prior convictions previously.

Rep. Alexander Lipsey (D-Kalamazoo), who voted in support for the bill, said more work is needed on amendments to the Sex Offenders Registration Act. He referenced an instance Tuesday where a registered

sex offender in his district requested an absentee ballot but was denied and his polling location was in a school.

Mr. VanRegenmorter said his hopes are to use the committee process as a way to address the several issues with the act, instead of using subcommittees as he had previously suggested.

BADGES AND UNIFORMS: The committee also tackled the issue of prohibiting the sale or possession of law enforcement agency patches and uniforms for people other than public safety officials. Exemptions for retirees, family members of public safety officers and actors are included in SB 444.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau), would add these additional items and criminalize the overt act of using them, a representative from her office said.

During the hearing, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard showed a video clip of a Michigan man who displays public safety symbols, saying he is a chaplain for several communities, but in fact, has no affiliation with the departments he speaks of.

“It’s very discerning,” Mr. Bouchard said. “I think it’s time we start tightening these things up. As long as they don’t report themselves to be a police officer than they would be exempt.”

A representative from the Michigan Sheriff’s Association said citizens make assumptions when they see someone in uniform, whether those assumptions are correct or not, so clearer wording would be preferred for the bill.

Committee chair Rep. William VanRegenmorter (R-Jenison) said several amendments have been proposed in recent days, but that those would not be addressed at a later time. The bill was given unanimous favorable recommendation.

Grand Rapids Press
Latest Updates
November 10, 2005

Sex offenders targeted

IONIA COUNTY -- State police arrested a half-dozen sex offenders countywide and were looking for others who allegedly failed to report where they are living.

The arrests were made during a three-week sweep dubbed Operation Verify.

Troopers, working with the sheriff's department and other local agencies, obtained warrants against eight sex offenders and arrested six for failing to comply with the state's sex-offender registry law.

The county is home to 211 of the state's 38,000 registered sex offenders.

Adoptive couple fight abuse charges

KENTWOOD -- Residents Jerome and Beryl Richards -- named Michigan adoptive parents of the year in 2002 -- are fighting civil charges of abuse and neglect.

According to court documents, the couple's home was the scene of multiple acts of sexual abuse, many involving an adult child and a younger brother and younger sister of his. The papers also alleged sexual abuse by children as young as 10 against other children.

The Richardses had "full knowledge" of the abuse but did nothing to stop it, the documents alleged. The couple also were accused of abusing children in the home by striking them with "belts, shoes, extension cords, coat hangers" and by withholding food "for long periods of time."

Jerome Richards, 59, and Beryl Richards, 53, were not accused of sexual abuse.

Social services workers removed 12 adopted children, ranging in age from 6 to 21, from the couple's home in May.

On Monday, the issue of whether the children should be permanently removed from the home will be heard in Kent County Circuit Court.

Good deeds: Celebrating unsung heroes

Livonia boy, 11, brings joy to the elderly

He is spearheading drive to collect stuffed animals so seniors in assisted living can have something to hug.

By Catherine Jun / The Detroit News
Thursday, November 10, 2005

LIVONIA -- Brandon Wallot got the idea when he saw the smile on his great-grandmother's face after he gave her a stuffed yellow rabbit

The 11-year-old from Livonia is organizing a stuffed animal drive, collecting new plush toys to deliver to senior citizens living in retirement and assisted living homes.

Called Critters 4 Cuddle, the campaign is about giving something to hug to people who are bedridden and sometimes alone.

"I didn't want seniors who didn't have family to be lonely," Brandon said.

Brandon's goal is to collect 200 stuffed animals and distribute them to residents at area senior citizens' homes by Christmas.

For the last several weeks, he spent hours after school and on weekends wrapping holiday paper around cardboard boxes, and setting them up at collection locations in the city.

Brandon and Stevenson High School senior Danielle Wozniak, 17, made posters that read: "Give a hug to a senior -- donate a stuffed toy."

Brandon contacted area stores asking for donations of plush animals. Among the toys he has already collected are an orange duck, and puppets shaped as bears, dogs and frogs. Inspiring people to donate is nothing new to Brandon.

Two years ago, he organized "Quarters 4 Christmas," a fund-raiser he ran with his friends to raise money to keep City Hall lit with Christmas lights. Through canister drives, they collected \$1,400.

With the stuffed animals, Brandon has been contacting senior citizens' homes to find places to deliver them in December.

"It's a nice thing for him to be doing," said Rosemarie Arakelian, an administrator at Manoogian Manor Retirement Homes on Middle Belt. "It's always nice when young people do something for the elderly; it doesn't happen that often," she said.

Brandon is collecting only new stuffed animals in the price range of \$5-\$10. They all need to be roughly the same size so seniors don't covet one another's toys. The animals, however, need to be big enough to hug.

Drop-off sites are at the AAA Michigan office on Six Mile and Newburgh, Livonia Senior Center on Farmington and Five Mile, and Cutting Crew Hair Salon on Seven Mile between Inkster and Middle Belt.

You can reach Catherine Jun at (734) 462-2204 or cjun@detnews.com.

Toys for Tots to launch campaign

*by Dan Sanderson-Staff Writer
Crawford County Avalanche*

For the second year in a row, the Crawford County Toys for Tots program has received grant funds to help jump start its annual holiday campaign.

The Toys "R" Us Children's Fund, Inc., which has teamed up with the United States Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation, has given the Crawford County Toys for Tots Program a \$3,000 grant to help purchase toys for children in the county.

Marian Gosnell, coordinator for the Crawford County Toys for Tots, said that the grant will allow volunteers to purchase toys that the program may be short on which are high in demand, and will also let her purchase more pricey toys for children in the county. "It's tremendous help," Gosnell said.

In its eighth year, the Crawford County Toys for Tots program gives toys to over 800 children in the county.

Unlike other areas, the generosity of the community allows the program to give four to five toys to children when only one toy and one stocking stuffer is recommended under national Toys for Tots guidelines, Gosnell said. The program also allows volunteers to give toys from infant children through high school students.

Families who are in need or have difficulty paying bills can sign up to take part in the Toys for Tots program at the Christian Help Center. The only requirement to benefit from the program is the family must reside within Crawford County.

"We want them to pay their bills and come to us to help with Christmas," Gosnell said. "If they feel they are need, they may come to us."

Despite the help of the grant, volunteers still encourage residents to donate new, un-wrapped toys to Toys for Tots.

"We don't want this to detract anyone donating because we still need their help, Gosnell said. Toys for Tots collection boxes will be in area businesses starting on Nov. 14.

Drop off sites include: Curves for Women, Bloomin' Grape Gourmet Deli and Market, Chemical Bank, Huntington Bank, Northland Area Federal Credit Union, Glen's Market, Grayling Regional Chamber of Commerce, the AAA office in the Grayling Mini Mall, Goodale's Bakery, Icehouse Quilt Shop, the Crawford County Sheriff's Department, Dollar General, Dr. Denholm's Chiropractic Clinic, J. Dap Company, Citizens Bank and North Central Area Credit Union. In addition, Crawford County Toys for Tots will have the program's train logos for sale in area bars and restaurants in December, where people can make donations and have their contributions recognized.

"We have a very generous community, and without their support, we would never be able to brighten the holidays for hundreds of children in the county," Gosnell said.

In Roscommon County, Don Nester Chevrolet Oldsmobile is serving as a drop-off site for the Toys for Tots program.

Maj. Bill Hendricks, United States Marine Corps Reserve, founded Toys for Tots in Los Angeles, Ca. in 1947 and collected 5,000 toys during the initial Christmas campaign. A year later, the United States Marine Corps adopted Toys for Tots as a nation wide community action project. Walt Disney designed the now famous Toys for Tots train logo, and created the first national Toys for Tots posters. Over the years, the posters have become a recognized part of the national program, and have featured such notable characters as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Dennis the Menace, Bugs Bunny and the Road Runner.

The Toys for Tots Foundation was created in 1989 to supplement toys donated by businesses and individuals and to allow program volunteers to plan and allocate their resources.

In 2004, the Toys for Tots campaign was conducted in 481 communities covering all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico - the most extensive coverage for the program to date and Marines and Toys for Tots volunteers distributed more than 19 million toys to 7.5 million needy children.

Detroit News
Thursday Briefs
11/10/05

Brighton

Grant funds anti-bullying program

The BASE -- Brighton Area Schools Educational -- Foundation awarded a \$4,750 grant to expand the school district's anti-bullying campaign into the elementary and high school. The anti-bullying program was started in the middle school last year with a similar grant from the BASE Foundation, and it was so successful it will be expanded. The BASE Foundation was founded in 1985 as a nonprofit, autonomous, tax-exempt organization. It's Independent of the school system with the goal to foster and develop parenting skills and asset development and to encourage creative ideas that reinforce effective parenting and asset building.

2 Lincoln Park boys face trial after fire

November 10, 2005

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Nearly 10 months after allegedly setting fire to their school, two Lincoln Park boys face trial today on arson charges in connection with more than \$2 million in damage that closed the August Keppen Elementary School for several months.

The boys, now 11 and 13, were arrested by Lincoln Park police in April, about three months after they allegedly used a cigarette lighter to set fire to curtains in the backstage area of the gymnasium.

Each boy was charged with arson and is expected to either enter a plea or stand trial today before Wayne County Family Court Judge Virgil Smith.

Students from one of the two third-grade classes were in the gymnasium when the fire began, but quick action by gym teacher Steve Miller prevented any injuries, according to police and school officials.

Miller ushered his students out of the gym and then went down the school halls blowing his whistle and shouting "fire" to alert teachers. About 350 students at the school quickly evacuated on Jan. 31.

Miller and school engineer Jeffrey Revoir then ran back into the gym with extinguishers but the flames were too intense.

The fire gutted the gym and caused extensive smoke damage to the school, which was closed for the rest of the year.

Lincoln Park Schools Superintendent Randall Kite said about two weeks after the fire, the faculty and student body were relocated to a nearby vacant parochial school, Calvary Lutheran, which the district rented for \$23,000 a month.

Damage was between \$2.2 million and \$2.6 million, Kite said. The district's insurance company has paid \$1.8 million so far and continues to negotiate with school officials for the balance, Kite said.

Many parents whose children attend Keppen said Wednesday they were unaware police had arrested anyone.

The boys, 10 and 12 when the fire occurred, were questioned soon after the fire but denied any involvement, according to the Lincoln Park police report filed in juvenile court. In April, after police developed more information linking the boys to the fire, the older boy admitted his involvement.

The boy said he and the 10-year-old decided to skip school because it was only going to be a half-day that day. After hanging out in the older boy's former home, which was then vacant, the boys decided to return to school and sneak in through the door near the gymnasium.

"We were bored and it was a half-day," the older boy wrote in his statement to police. "We both lit the curtains just to put a little whole (sic) in them. We ran out and it turned out the school went up in flames."

The other boy did not make a statement to police.

Parents of the boys and the children's attorneys, Thomas Warshaw of Farmington Hills and Matthew Walton of Mt. Clemens, didn't return calls seeking comment.

Three things could happen if the boys are convicted: The judge could give them a lecture and dismiss the case; they could be placed on probation, or they could be placed under the supervision of the Wayne County Department of Children and Family Services.

The DCFS would determine what services they need to be rehabilitated, possibly including removal from their parents' care and being placed in a residential facility.

On Wednesday, parents said they thought school and district officials had done an admirable job getting the children to safety. "The kindergarten teacher, she got everyone out and then went back in to get their coats," said Nancy Fleteau, who was waiting to pick up her grandson, Jacob Chaput, 6, from school Wednesday.

Contact JACK KRESNAK at 313-223-4544 or kresnak@freepress.com

Editorials

Maybe help is on its way

Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2005 10:42 AM EST
Dowagiac Daily News

If you have read the fine print on some of your monthly bills lately, you may have noticed an increase tacked on at the end for higher fuel costs.

The additional costs which are being seen with the gasoline prices, trash companies and other services which rely on trucks or other vehicles are passing on the increase to homeowners.

With a predication of heating costs going up this fall and winter, many who live on fixed incomes are facing problems getting through the season.

We applaud U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, who this week introduced legislation to provide immediate \$500 cash rebates to help Michigan families.

“Fuel isn't a luxury item for people in Michigan, it's a necessity, and my Energy Tax Rebate Act will help middle class families pay for this necessity,” Stabenow said.

She mentions oil companies are reporting record profits, while families are paying an average of 36 percent more for a gallon of gas and natural gas and propane are showing huge jumps in price.

She is also concerned to stop price-gouging and price-fixing by oil companies and she has launched an investigation to look into bad practices.

The Stabenow bill would also ask Congress to fully fund the program to give seniors and low-income families home heating assistance.

We support the senator's efforts and hope her fight for middle class families will be enacted and provide some relief to this winter's rising heating costs.

Head Start funds on chopping block

*Katie Oliveri
The Enquirer
November 10, 2005*

Bonnie Culver faced a challenge.

About five years ago, Culver's son was diagnosed at 7 months old with a severe type of hemophilia, forcing frequent doctor visits and hospital stays.

Daycare options were few.

Then the Battle Creek resident, who recently moved to Mason, was referred to the Community Action Agency of South Central Michigan. Her son, now 6 years old, was accepted into the Early Head Start program.

With help from the program, Culver was able to attend classes and receive a bachelor's degree in business administration to begin her work at a home care company, specializing in the treatment of hemophilia.

Today, Culver is working toward her master's degree.

"I was so blessed by CAA," Culver said. "They gave my son and I a chance at a better life." Head Start, a federal program that provides a classroom environment and full-year daycare for children up to 4 years old from low-income families, is facing a possible budget cut that would affect an estimated 35,000 Head Start children nationwide.

Congress is considering a 2 percent spending reduction to offset costs for hurricane relief. And Michigan is one of the 10 potentially hardest-hit states. The reduction could cut program slots for 1,374 children statewide and reduce services to families in the Battle Creek area, experts say.

According to Richard Lower, executive director of the Lansing-based Michigan Head Start Association, the across-the-board cuts to most social service programs would amount to \$82 million nationwide. Out of that total, Michigan's share is \$9 million.

It's an immediate threat and serious issue, Lower said.

"We don't want to reduce access to high-class preschool education," he said. "We serve the poverty level, so it would be a travesty to lose one slot, especially when programs already are dealing with lower-than-inflation funding levels. It's like adding insult to injury."

On Oct. 6, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., unveiled plans to cut fiscal year 2006 spending. While Hastert didn't identify a percentage for the across-the-board cuts, House staff members have suggested that those cuts would be at least 2 percent, which would mean a cut of \$82 million to Head Start and Early Head Start, according to the National Head Start Association.

Last week, the Senate voted 52 to 47 to make \$35 billion in budget cuts. Michigan Democratic Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow voted no.

The House is expected to vote on \$54 billion in budget cuts later this week, including \$5 billion in child support enforcement.

U.S. Rep. Joe Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, couldn't be reached Wednesday for comment. Wanda Miller, a Head Start parent in Battle Creek, has had all of her children go through the program. She is concerned, however, about Head Start's future.

"Head Start and Early Head Start have really helped to get my children ready for life, in and out of school," Miller said. "These programs taught them self-control and how to interact with others. Without the funding, a lot of children won't get the training they need to do well in life."

Locally, CAASCM is one of 33 agencies in the state promoting economic and social opportunities that help people achieve greater independence, dignity and self-sufficiency, according to its Web site.

It serves residents of Barry, Branch, Calhoun and St. Joseph counties and targets its programs and services to the specific needs of those communities.

"Our Head Start and Early Head Start children have parents losing jobs and working for minimum wage," said Pattie Walter, CAASCM's superintendent of education and children's services. "Now Congress is discussing cutting Head Start slots for services available to these poorest of the poor. Why is a program like Head Start being slowly strangled to death? When is someone going to jump in and champion for these families?"

Walter said her agency serves about 800 Head Start children in the four-county area, including 80 children from newborn to 3 years old and 26 expectant mothers in the Early Head Start program.

The programs are housed in about 13 area classrooms with the help of 78 staff members in Battle Creek alone.

Vicki Neubaum of Battle Creek, Head Start Policy Council member and former Head Start parent, said the program played a big role in her son being prepared for kindergarten.

"This program allows kids to interact with other kids and gives them the skills that they need to enter kindergarten," Neubaum said. "A lot of kids are at different levels when entering school ... this program makes sure that all of its students are ready."

According to Walter, however, "there are still hundreds more children, families and expectant mothers throughout the area that are in need of Head Start and Early Head Start services. But by reducing instead of increasing funding, they will never get the help they need."

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VOLUNTEER HEALTH CARE: Physicians who are retired would have some liability immunity when providing volunteer health services to the uninsured under a bill unanimously reported from the committee Wednesday. The legislation is HB 5375.

Good deeds: Celebrating unsung heroes
St. Clair Shores woman protects families
Award lauds her work to develop safety plans, give other aid for
Macomb's domestic violence survivors.

By Christina Stolarz / The Detroit News

Thursday, November 10, 2005

ST. CLAIR SHORES -- Each day, Dawn Walker works to protect women and children in Macomb County from domestic violence.

Walker, coordinator of the Family to Family program for the County Department of Human Services, develops safety plans for families who are seeking shelter and educates her staff on local assistance programs. She's also trying to establish a support group in Warren.

"People in this situation really need as much support and as many resources as we can connect them with in order for them to be safe," said Walker, 40. "We want to make sure all kids and families are safe."

Her efforts on behalf of Macomb domestic violence survivors earned the St. Clair Shores woman the Tracy Minella Award from the Macomb Community Domestic Violence Council. The award is named after a battered Macomb County woman who was murdered in 1998.

"Dawn has been a wonderful ally in our mission to provide comprehensive service to families affected by domestic violence," said Aimee Nimeh, chairwoman of the council.

Domestic violence advocacy has been Walker's mission for roughly 17 years. Her efforts have increased greatly this year since the county's department of human services has partnered with Turning Point, the Mount Clemens-based domestic violence and sexual assault center. Last year, Turning Point provided services to more than 4,000 domestic violence survivors and sheltered more than 400 women and children.

Debbie McPeck, director of programs at Turning Point, said Walker "really went above and beyond the call of duty."

"She really went extra in speaking with her colleagues," about the impact of domestic violence on women, McPeck said.

Walker believes more families will be helped if the county works with Turning Point, which is why she's training her staff members on the Turing Point services, such as prevention education, hospital advocacy and a 24-hour crisis hotline.

Walker doesn't believe she's doing anything special. She's just simply fighting for what she believes in.

"I was extremely honored," she said. "But, it's not so much a tribute to me and what I've done but what our agencies are doing together.

"What we really want domestic violence victims to know is that there's help out there."

She also invites members of Turning Point to sit in on meetings when the department considers removing a child from a home because they have the means to further help the families.

You can reach Christina Stolarz at (586) 468-0343 or cstolarz@detnews.com.

Domestic violence council holds silent witness

Gladwin County Record
Thursday, November 10, 2005

GLADWIN COUNTY – The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Shelterhouse) recently held a Silent Witness Display to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence. Throughout downtown Gladwin, silhouettes with information on domestic and sexual violence were displayed.

Each silhouette included information on an adult or child who was killed due to domestic violence during the past year in Michigan. Community members gathered in front of the United Way building near the end of the day to talk about domestic violence. Circuit Court Judge Tom Evans, Sheriff Mike Shea, Victims Rights Coordinator Debbie Primeau, United Way Director Tami Jenkinson and Shelterhouse Director Sharon Mortensen all shared their perspectives on domestic violence.

This October event was held in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Nationwide, communities come together to remember the courage and strength of domestic violence survivors and to rededicate themselves to ending domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a pattern of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. According to Mortensen, domestic violence knows no limitations – it does not matter the income, the education, the ethnicity, the religion, the age or other factors. Domestic violence touches all.

Also participating was Mary Hess of the prosecutor's office, who chairs the Gladwin County Domestic and Sexual Violence Coordinating Council. The group's mission is to reduce domestic and sexual violence through a coordinated community effort of prevention, education and collaboration.

The group is working on updating a victim's card which will be used by law enforcement.

Grant to help shelter expand housing program

Thursday, November 10, 2005

By Brian Wheelerbwheeler@citpat.com -- 768-4928

Battered women who don't have children will soon have a new resource to help them move on with their lives.

Jackson's AWARE shelter will use a \$174,000 federal grant to expand its "transitional housing" program -- up to two years of intense assistance and financial help that aims to keep clients from becoming homeless.

The money from the Justice Department will let AWARE fill a growing need. The housing program -- different from the better-known emergency shelter -- serves only families.

Yet the number of women without children has been a growing clientele. Last year those women made up nearly half of the shelter's emergency clients, up from one-third as recently as 2002. "We're not really sure why," Nicole Hall, AWARE's executive director, said of the trend. "But that's a lot of growth very quickly."

The shelter and Community Action Agency both offer transitional housing. In AWARE's case, it's typically an extension of the emergency shelter that's provided to abuse victims.

The shelter last year helped 176 women and 154 children, Hall said, but the transitional program has room for only 20 adults at a time. The grant will let the program double in size, starting in January.

Mission marks century of nurturing the needy

Thursday, November 10, 2005
THE SAGINAW NEWS

Gilbert T. Munoz had a void in his life.

The 49-year-old Saginaw native tried drinking and alcohol, in his words, which became a problem for him in his decades-long good times lifestyle in California.

"It was a big party scene," he said. "Everything was party."

But the 49-year-old knew there was something more, something missing.

The utility maintenance worker returned to Saginaw in August 2001 to reconnect with family and look for answers.

"I was running away from my problems," he said. He jumped from job to job, lived off savings and ran into several people who became not friends but "users."

And he discovered something else.

"There was a drinking problem that kept me away from the Lord," he said.

He found what he was looking for in a place that's provided answers for many the last century -- the City Rescue Mission of Saginaw.

"I feel fulfilled in my heart," he said after eight months of sobriety living and attending Bible study and educational classes at the mission. "It took away that void."

100 years of history

From the day it opened its doors Nov. 11, 1905, the City Rescue Mission has ministered and helped people in Saginaw like Munoz get their lives together through religion and finding a direction.

It hasn't stopped, said Kenneth Streeter, executive director of the center since 1976.

"There's a never ending supply of needy," he said.

The rescue mission for the homeless, 1021 Burt, will mark its 100th anniversary Friday in a special event at the Temple Theatre, 203 N. Washington.

"It's a time that we reflect on those that go before us and looking forward to those who will come behind us," he said.

With a \$2 million annual budget and about 30 staff members, it's always a struggle for the mission itself to get what it needs to help those that don't have, said Streeter, the only mission employee when he took the job three decades ago.

"We're constantly in a funding crisis," he said.

How has it survived? "It has to be by God's grace," he said.

Grace that includes about 200 mid-Michigan churches among other donors, Streeter said.

In recent years, the Rescue Mission has added the 90-bed Community Village, 3200 Hospital in Saginaw Township, to care for senior citizens and this year opened the Good Samaritan Rescue Mission in Bay City.

The larger organization will rename itself Rescue Ministries of Mid-Michigan.

A rescue of a city

After a century, the heart of its operations remains the 110-bed Rescue Mission in Saginaw, born at the end of the lumber era at a time when lawlessness and bawdiness marked the city's streets, history shows.

The mission took under its wing hobos who rode rail cars from town to town and men who had lost their way in life through alcohol, among other woes.

"The Rescue Mission creates avenues of ministry to people," Streeter said. "The idea is to provide emergency shelter for people facing the crisis of homelessness."

A changing journey

Today, the demographics of who it helps has changed: While it still serves single men trying to piece their lives together, nearly two thirds of the 1,200 people a year who show up are women with children, Streeter said.

"It really seems to focus on the breakdown of the home," he said. "Today, the greatest cause of poverty is probably divorce or families that are started without marriage. We do see a generation of poverty leading to another generation of poverty."

The women who arrive with children in hand face an emotional journey to reach a plateau of independence, mission caretakers say.

"By the time they come here, they've tried everything else," said Robin L. Tyndall, director of women's discipleship. "They have come to a realization that it is Christ they're needing because nothing else has worked. We're here to give them a future and a hope."

"Some of them come kind of down, depressed, lonely, not sure what's going to happen to them," said Hazel E. Euber, who runs the mission day care. "We want to reassure them they are in a safe place. We try not to turn anybody down."

The mission is a self-contained community. It has dormitory-style sleeping rooms, a 170-seat chapel, a computer lab, classrooms, a library, kitchen, dining area and day care for children.

"We try to make this encompass their whole life," Tyndall said.

The center has a 30-day pre-Discipleship Program, which mostly attracts men. It disallows any contact with the outside world through visits, mail or phone calls.

The point is for the men to identify why they are where they are, said Rev. John Poling, a burly preacher who directs the men's program.

"We're not processing widgets," Poling said. "We're trying to (win) lives for Jesus Christ."

If devotees pass, some will enter a four-level, nine-month-long Bible-based recovery and transformation.

"Our approach is we sit down and work with a man and resolve how he's going to solve his problems," Streeter said.

The mission doesn't ascribe to any Christian church.

"We stay focused on the 99 percent of the Bible that Christians can totally agree on," he said.

About 85 percent of the people who reach out to the shelter don't return after their first visit, Streeter said.

"I'm always impressed by the testimony of people who have had a very difficult transformation through Christ," he said. "That is what keeps me going."

The past reborn

The Rescue Mission's roots began near the turn of the century when Melvin E. Trotter "stumbled" into the Pacific Garden Mission, a former tavern in Chicago.

"He had been labeled a hopeless alcoholic," Streeter said. "At the time, he was even anticipating suicide."

A religious conversion transformed his life to something much different and much better, Streeter said.

Trotter, a former barber, became an evangelist and part of the Rescue Mission. He took what he knew on the road, serving as the superintendent of the Grand Rapids mission, then founded another in Saginaw. It was the first of 67 missions he would open throughout the nation, Saginaw Township resident Gary D. Warner wrote in his book, "Lighting the Way Home, The City Rescue Mission Of Saginaw's First Hundred Years."

Trotter's brother, George, served as the first mission superintendent when it opened at 111 Genesee, next door to the Oakley Saloon. Within a year, the mission took its show on the road with the horse-drawn Gospel Wagon. Evangelists onboard the wagon "would sing and preach to people in the street and it did attract a lot of attention in its day," Warner said.

The Great Depression brought a mountain of challenges as the ranks of the unemployed turned to soup lines at the mission, he said.

"The facility became less and less adequate to meet people's needs," he said. "They faced a lot of overcrowding in the first three years of the Great Depression."

The charitable group handed out clothing, furniture and heating equipment to help people survive, Warner said. The mission has called seven places home prior to moving to the northwest corner of Burt and East Genesee in 1982. A nearly \$3 million expansion and renovation added about 30 sleeping rooms between 2000-2002. v

Barrie Barber is a staff writer for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9725.

Volunteer clinic in the home stretch for permanent fund

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Bay City Times Editorial

The Helen M. Nickless Volunteer Clinic is in the home stretch of its first - and its last - fund-raising campaign.

Organizers say they've collected nearly \$3 million of the \$3.8 million they need to keep the clinic open with interest earned on the invested money.

About \$300,000 of that will pay for office supplies, drugs and the pay for a couple of staff for the next two years. After that, the clinic's fund will take over.

This clinic is worth every penny it gets.

Most of the work in the Wednesday night clinics is done by volunteers from all walks of life, and doctors and other medical professionals donating their time and expertise.

Since March 2004, when the clinic started, they've seen more than 1,400 patients. Most of them are the working poor - people with jobs but no medical insurance.

Without the clinic, these patients would be trying to tough out their illnesses at home, or filling hospital emergency room lobbies.

In just 19 months, this clinic has become a vital resource for Bay County.

With a little more money, it can stay that way for many years to come.

- Our View is the editorial opinion of The Bay City Times, as determined by the newspaper's editorial board, which includes the editorial page editor, the editor and the publisher.

info box: Clinic cash

To give to the Volunteer Clinic, phone 894-3794 or write Bay Medical Foundation - Volunteer Clinic, 1900 Columbus Ave., Bay City, MI 48708

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 9, 2005

Governor Granholm Signs Executive Directive Creating Bureau of Fire Services in Michigan

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today issued an executive directive establishing a roadmap for the creation of a new agency that will be responsible for the fire service related aspects of the state's homeland security and emergency response efforts.

“Michigan's firefighters, fire chiefs, and other members of fire service play a vital role in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of citizens across the state,” Granholm said. “This directive will establish a process for the consolidation of resources to allow our fire service personnel to be more effective and efficient which, in turn, will strengthen Michigan's emergency management and homeland security efforts.”

Executive Directive 2005-10 requires the Department of Labor and Economic Growth to report to the Governor changes necessary to establish a new Bureau of Fire Services headed by the State Fire Marshal. It designates the State Fire Marshal as a policy advisor to the Governor on state fire service issues. The directive also requires the Department of Labor and Economic Growth and the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division to assure that the State Fire Marshal is represented at the state Emergency Operations Center.

In addition, all state departments and agencies must conduct an assessment to determine which fire-related services the new Bureau of Fire Services will administer. The State Fire Marshal and Michigan State Police Emergency Management Services must also report measures that can improve the state's response to large disasters or emergencies involving fire services and make the Michigan Emergency Management Assistance Compact more effective for the state's fire services. These reports are to be presented to the Governor by November 30, 2005.

This directive is part of a continuous effort by the Governor and the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division to ensure all relevant factors are taken into consideration in the development and implementation of effective and coordinated homeland security response measures.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 9, 2005

Governor Granholm Appoints Robertson as State Librarian

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today announced the appointment of Nancy R. Robertson as State Librarian. Robertson, of Jackson, has been serving as acting state librarian since February of this year.

Ms. Robertson has worked at the State Library since 1995. Prior to serving as acting state librarian she was deputy state librarian for internal operations and the curator and rare book librarian.

Ms. Robertson holds a Master's of Science degree in Library and Information Science from Drexel University, a Master's of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Illinois, and a Bachelor's of Arts degree from the College of Wooster, Ohio.

Ms. Robertson is appointed for a term expiring at the pleasure of the Governor. She succeeds Christie P. Brandau who has resigned.

The Governor, in consultation with the Library of Michigan Board of Trustees, appoints the state librarian, who is charged with the care of all administrative functions of the Library. This appointment is subject to Article V, Section 6 of the Michigan State Constitution of 1963. It stands confirmed unless disapproved by the Senate within 60 days.

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